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Letter dated 11 March 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the first progress report of the Commission of the African Union on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

First progress report of the Commission of the African Union on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in conformity with paragraph 32 of resolution 2127 (2013), adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 5 December 2013. In that resolution, the Security Council requested the African Union, in close coordination with the Secretary-General and other international organizations and bilateral partners involved in the crisis, to report to the Security Council every 60 days on the deployment and activities of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA). Within this framework, the Commission formally solicited contributions from France, in relation to Operation Sangaris, as well as the United Nations. On 6 February 2014, France sent the information requested, particularly with regard to coordination between Sangaris and MISCA.

2. The report covers the period from 19 December 2013 to the end of February 2014 and provides an update on major political, security, humanitarian and human rights developments in the Central African Republic and the activities of MISCA, following the transfer of authority from the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) of the Peace and Security Council of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The report concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. Political and institutional aspects

3. The Security Council will recall that, following the unconstitutional change of government that occurred on 24 March 2013 and on the basis of the efforts of ECCAS, the Central African Republic stakeholders agreed on a maximum transition period of 18 months, which will culminate in the organization of presidential and legislative elections. On 5 July 2013, the Constitutional Charter for the Transition was adopted, before being promulgated on 18 July 2013. A National Transitional Council of 135 members and a Constitutional Council were established on 15 April and 16 August 2013, respectively. Mr. Michel Djotodia was elected Head of State of the Transition, on 13 April 2013, and sworn in on 18 August 2013. Mr. Nicolas Tiangaye, who was appointed Prime Minister under the Libreville Agreement of 11 January 2013, retained his post. The elements of a road map for the transition, proposed at the fourth extraordinary summit of ECCAS, held in N'Djamena, on 18 April 2013, were accepted by the Transitional Government of National Unity, which in turn worked out a more detailed road map that was adopted by the National Transitional Council on 7 November 2013. It should be noted that the law establishing the High Council of Communication has not yet been promulgated.

4. Notwithstanding these efforts, the situation did not improve. With regard to the security situation, the abuses against the civilian population, both by the ex-Séléka and by other armed groups, continued. At the political level, there were several disagreements between the two heads of the executive branch, who could not provide the necessary impetus to the transition process. As a result, no significant progress was made in the implementation of the road map for the transition, particularly regarding the primary objective of restoring security and public law and order in Bangui and the rest of the country. The humanitarian situation deteriorated considerably, especially in the wake of the deadly attacks launched in Bangui on 5 December 2013 by elements belonging to the group known as the anti-balaka ("anti-machetes", although, in urban areas, the term is reported to be a contraction of the expression "anti-balles AK" ("anti-AK bullets")).

5. In view of this situation, the African Union Special Representative in the Central African Republic and head of MISCA, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, and the representative of President Denis Sassou Nguesso, ECCAS Mediator and Chair of its Follow-up Committee on the Central African Republic, in coordination with members of the international community in Bangui, took a number of initiatives to help the Central African Republic actors to overcome their differences and implement the transition road map. The African Union Special Representative held extensive consultations, in collaboration with the Group of Five (United Nations, African Union, European Union, United States of America and France) and the Technical Follow-up Committee on the Libreville Global Peace Agreement, as part of the efforts to bring the various leaders of the institutions of the transition together. Similarly, he initiated consultations with several other ambassadors, representatives of accredited international organizations and special envoys dispatched to the Central African Republic.

6. On 28 December 2013 a joint African Union-ECCAS delegation, comprising the Foreign Ministers of the Congo and Chad, the Minister of Defence of the Congo and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, visited Bangui. The delegation seized the opportunity to stress the need for cohesion and unity of action among all the actors of the transition.

7. It is against this background, and given the continuing deterioration of the situation, that the sixth extraordinary summit of the ECCAS Heads of State and Government was held in N'Djamena on 9 and 10 January 2014, under the chairmanship of President Idriss Déby Itno, in his capacity as Chairman of ECCAS. The African Union was represented at that meeting by a delegation led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, and actively participated in the consultations which made it possible to reach agreement on the way forward. In the communiqué issued after the deliberations, the summit participants deplored the passivity of the entire Central African Republic political class and the lack of cohesion, harmony and unity among the authorities of the transition, stressing that this situation had not allowed the international community to provide the necessary support towards a solution to the crisis. The summit participants took note of the resignation of the Head of State and the Prime Minister of the Transition, and called upon all Central African Republic political and social actors to continue their consultations to elect, as soon as possible, a new Head of State of the Transition and form a transitional government, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitutional Charter for the Transition. In addition, they urged the African Union and ECCAS, in liaison with

the Central African Republic stakeholders and the relevant partners and under the auspices of the Mediator, to organize a national reconciliation conference.

8. On 20 January 2014, following a two-round vote, Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, mayor of the city of Bangui, was elected Head of State of the Transition, ending the interim period during which that function had been performed, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitutional Charter for the Transition, by the President of the National Transitional Council, Mr. Alexandre-Ferdinand Nguendet. The African Union Special Representative worked actively with the Bureau of the Council to help organize the election, particularly with respect to the definition of the eligibility criteria. He subsequently maintained consultations with the new Head of State of the Transition on the size of the government to be established. In a communiqué issued on the same day, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomed this development and urged the Central African Republic actors to provide the necessary support to the new Head of State in the discharge of her responsibilities. On 24 January 2014, the Head of State of the Transition appointed a Prime Minister, André Nzapayéké, who formed a cabinet of 20 members, including seven women. The first cabinet meeting was held on 3 February 2014 and provided an opportunity for each minister to present an engagement letter, which should be in line with the transition road map.

9. At its meeting of 29 January 2014, held at the level of Heads of State and Government, the African Union Peace and Security Council considered the situation in the Central African Republic. The Council noted with satisfaction the decisions adopted by the ECCAS extraordinary summit, reaffirmed the leading role of the ECCAS current Chairman and the Chairman of its Follow-up Committee in providing political support to the transition, and expressed its full support for their efforts. The Council also urged the international community as a whole, including the United Nations, to give all the necessary support to the efforts of the leaders of the region to facilitate effective international action in support of the Central African Republic. The Council demanded that all the Central African Republic stakeholders concerned, including leaders of the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka and of the regime of former President François Bozizé, unequivocally call upon their followers to put an immediate end to the attacks against civilians and any other action that might undermine the efforts to restore peace, security and stability in the Central African Republic, as well as to promote reconciliation. The Peace and Security Council requested the Commission to review and adjust, as necessary, the list of individuals targeted by sanctions, as annexed to its communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLXIII). The Council also welcomed the decision of the United Nations Security Council to impose, for an initial period of one year, a travel ban and assets freeze on individuals and entities designated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to paragraph 57 of its resolution 2127 (2013). The Peace and Security Council requested the African Union Commission and MISCA, as well as all member States, to provide all the necessary support to the Panel of Experts to be established by the United Nations Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 59 of resolution 2127 (2013).

10. For its part, the Technical Follow-up Committee on the Libreville Global Peace Agreement, which includes the Group of Five, convened on 30 January 2014, one day after meeting with the Prime Minister, to prepare a workplan to support the Government, in particular as regards the preparations for the electoral process, the restoration of State authority in the hinterland, and the activation of financial

institutions. In this regard, the redeployment of the civil administration, although hampered by insecurity, is under way, with the appointment of sub-prefects and the municipal councillors of the eight Bangui districts.

11. During the period under review, the African Union Special Representative maintained close contact with the Central African Republic political actors and other stakeholders as part of the African Union's support for the transition. In this respect, and in concert with other members of the international community, he endeavoured to defuse the tension between Mr. Djotodia and Mr. Tiangaye, then Head of State and Prime Minister of the Transition, respectively, following the publication of decrees dismissing three ministers and the Accountant General, decrees which, in violation of the Constitutional Charter for the Transition, were not countersigned by the Prime Minister. Similarly, and as pointed out above, the Special Representative actively contributed, together with other members of the international community, to the preparations for the election of a new Head of State of the Transition, following the outcome of the extraordinary summit of ECCAS held in N'Djamena on 9 and 10 January 2014, including through the definition of the eligibility criteria. After the election, he held consultations with the new Head of State on the size of the government that was to be established, in order to facilitate the mobilization of the necessary support from the international community.

12. Furthermore, the African Union Special Representative met with senior officials from partner countries and organizations who visited Bangui during the period under consideration. Among others, he held talks with the following officials: Ms. Samantha Power, Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations (19 December 2013); a United Nations delegation comprising the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun; the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Leila Zerrougui; and Ms. Nancee Oku Bright of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (from 19 to 21 December 2013); Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Defence of the French Republic (2 January and 12 February 2014); the Chief of Staff of the French Army, General Bertrand Ract-Madoux (24 December 2013 and 6 February 2014); and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Antonio Guterres (12 February 2014). To all these officials, he presented the situation obtaining on the ground and the political and other efforts being exerted by the African Union, and exchanged views with them on the best ways and means of ensuring more sustained international action in support of MISCA.

III. Activities in connection with elections

13. Regarding the preparations for the electoral process, it should be noted that the seven members of the National Electoral Authority, appointed by decree on 16 December 2013, were sworn in on 24 December 2013, marking the launch of the operationalization of this structure. Since then, the members of the Authority have worked towards making the premises allocated functional and adopting their rules of procedure. The United Nations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has sent experts to assess the needs and prepare budget estimates for the Authority. Other partners, including the European Union and France, have pledged financial contributions. MISCA ensures the security of the

Authority's premises and escorts members of this structure when they are travelling in Bangui and elsewhere in the country.

14. The Authority, with logistical support from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and security support from MISCA, visited prefectures in the interior of the country from 14 to 27 January 2014, with the aim of assessing the resources available for the forthcoming elections. In addition, an electoral needs assessment team was sent by the United Nations during January-February 2014. Similarly, the African Union Commission intends to recruit an electoral expert to support the Authority. The expert will serve as the interface between MISCA and the Authority to identify ways in which the African Union can continue to support the Authority and the entire electoral process. From 17 to 21 February 2014, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs visited Bangui to assess the state of preparedness for the elections and the ways and means of providing more sustained African Union support for the electoral process.

IV. Establishment and deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA)

15. As part of the efforts to address the security challenges facing the Central African Republic, ECCAS and the African Union agreed to increase the strength of MICOPAX and transform it into an African mission. In pursuance of these efforts, on 19 July 2013, the African Union Peace and Security Council authorized the deployment of MISCA to contribute to the protection of civilians and the stabilization of the country. On 5 December 2013, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2127 (2013), in which it endorsed the deployment of MISCA for a period of 12 months, to contribute to:

(a) the protection of civilians and the restoration of security and public order, through the use of appropriate measures;

(b) the stabilization of the country and the restoration of State authority over the whole territory of the country;

(c) the creation of conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need;

(d) the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement process led by the transitional authorities and coordinated by BINUCA; and

(e) national and international efforts to reform and restructure the defence and security sectors led by the transitional authorities and coordinated by BINUCA.

16. In the meantime, on 22 November 2013, and after consultation with ECCAS, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko of the Congo, then Deputy High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, as Special Representative and Head of MISCA. Brigadier-General Martin Tumenta Chomu of Cameroon was appointed as Force Commander, while Gendarmerie Colonel Patrice Ostaga Bengone of Gabon was appointed Head of the police component. General Athanase Kararuza of Burundi was appointed Deputy Force Commander. Consultations are under way for the

appointment of the Deputy Police Commissioner, while the announcement of the appointment of the Deputy Special Representative is expected to be made shortly.

17. In the period that followed, and pursuant to the relevant communiqués of the Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission and the ECCAS General Secretariat intensified their consultations to ensure a successful handover from MICOPAX to MISCA. This consultation process began immediately after the Peace and Security Council decision of 19 July 2013 mandating the deployment of MISCA. In this context, several meetings were held, including one in Addis Ababa, from 2 to 3 September and from 7 to 10 October 2013 to finalize the MISCA strategic concept of operations and concept of logistical support, in cooperation with all stakeholders, including the United Nations. Given the importance of continued cooperation between the African Union and ECCAS for the success of MISCA, on 7 December 2013 the two organizations concluded an agreement on the deployment of the operation. This agreement covers such aspects as force generation, the establishment of the Mission headquarters, troop deployment, coordination and monitoring, the legal framework for capacity contributions to MISCA, and resource mobilization and logistical support. On 5 December 2013, the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Central African Republic Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Central Africans Abroad signed the agreement on the status of MISCA.

18. In its resolution 2127 (2013), the Security Council, having welcomed the consultations held between the African Union Commission and countries of the region and the support provided by the United Nations and Member States to finalize all aspects of the transition from MICOPAX to MISCA, requested the African Union and ECCAS to ensure that the transfer of authority from MICOPAX to MISCA would take effect on 19 December 2013. The transfer of authority from MICOPAX to MISCA took place on 19 December 2013, at a ceremony chaired by Mr. Nicolas Tiangaye, then Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of National Unity, in the presence of many other Central African Republic personalities and representatives of the international community, including the United Nations.

19. In response to the deteriorating security situation in the country in early December 2013, the Heads of State of the region, the African Union, represented by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, and international partners held consultations in Paris on 7 December 2013, immediately following the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa, held in Paris on 6 and 7 December 2013. On 13 December 2013, the Peace and Security Council decided to authorize a temporary increase in the strength of MISCA to a maximum of 6,000 uniformed personnel, with the understanding that this increase would be reviewed within a period of three months, in the light of changing circumstances and needs on the ground and on the basis of a report to be submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission.

20. The Commission immediately took the necessary measures to strengthen MISCA. It was in this context that the deployment, already agreed upon, of a Burundian battalion of 850 troops was accelerated and completed between 12 and 20 December 2013, thanks to the support of the United States. Between 16 and 28 January 2014, also with the support of the United States, a Rwandan mechanized battalion of 850 troops was deployed. The Democratic Republic of the Congo deployed a battalion of 836 troops, whose integration modalities into MISCA were

agreed upon during a mission that the Commission dispatched to Kinshasa from 16 to 19 February 2014. The military strength of MISCA currently stands at 5,420 troops, comprised as follows: Burundi (850), Cameroon (515), Chad (814), Congo (863), Democratic Republic of the Congo (836), Equatorial Guinea (202), Gabon (490) and Rwanda (850). The police component has a total strength of 640 personnel, provided by Cameroon (320), Chad (34), the Congo (136), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (149) and Gabon (1). MISCA also has a Joint Operations Centre with a strength of nine personnel: three civilian, four military and two police. The substantive civilian component of MISCA currently stands at 34 elements. The staffing process of the Force and Police Headquarters is under way. In the meantime, these functions are performed by the re-hatted MICOPAX personnel.

21. Following the transfer of authority, MISCA adopted a plan for dividing the capital, Bangui, into sectors in order to cover the city's eight districts. Thus, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th districts were assigned to the Burundian contingent, while the 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th districts were placed under the responsibility of the Rwandan contingent. These contingents operate jointly with the MISCA formed police units. This division into sectors was done in line with the administrative division of the city. A total of 1,902 military and 640 police personnel are deployed in Bangui. Other contingents, numbering 3,518 soldiers, are deployed across the country as follows: Sector 1, with a command post at Bouar (515); Sector 2, with a command post at Bossangoa (795); Sector 3, with a command post at Boali (863); Sector 4, with a command post at Sibut (490); and Sector 5, with a command post at Mobaye (836). These sectors correspond, respectively, to the following administrative areas: Sector 1: Ouham Pende, Nana Mambere and Mambere Kadei; Sector 2: Ouham-Nana Grebizi, Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga; Sector 3: Ombela Mpoko, Lobaye and Sanga Mbaere; Sector 4: Ouaka and Kemo; and Sector 5: Haute Koto, Basse Koto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou.

V. Coordination with Operation Sangaris and the regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and support to the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

22. On the ground, MISCA cooperates closely with the French initiative Operation Sangaris. This cooperation is called for in the relevant provisions of the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 November 2013, in which the Peace and Security Council welcomed the proposed strengthening of the French contingent in the Central African Republic to better support MISCA, and encouraged the Commission to work for effective operational coordination between MISCA and the French forces. The cooperation is also called for in paragraphs 49 and 50 of resolution 2127 (2013). To facilitate this coordination, MISCA and Operation Sangaris have established cooperation mechanisms at the level of both the MISCA headquarters and that of the Burundian and Rwandan battalions. The Commanders of MISCA and Operation Sangaris meet regularly and military intelligence is shared between the two headquarters. The two forces regularly carry out joint patrols both in Bangui and in the provinces and jointly plan the conduct of specific operations.

23. In its communiqués of 13 November and 13 December 2013, the Peace and Security Council also requested MISCA to coordinate the implementation of its mandate with the contingent of the regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, deployed, under African Union mandate, in the Obo sector in the prefecture of Haut-Mbomou. Arrangements are being made for the deployment of liaison officers from that initiative to MISCA and vice versa.

24. MISCA receives technical and financial support from many partners. Operation Sangaris and the United States have seconded officers to MISCA. In addition, Sangaris provides medical support to MISCA, including treatment of injured personnel at level II field hospitals established by France, the supply of pharmaceuticals and medical evacuation through the use of utility helicopters during joint operations. The United Nations has deployed technical experts. On the financial side, several countries and organizations assist MISCA. At the pledging conference organized by the African Union, with the support of the United Nations, about $314 million, corresponding to contributions in cash and in kind, was mobilized from the following countries and institutions: Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Japan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, United States, ECCAS and the European Union; the contribution of the European Union constitutes a substantial share of the financial resources mobilized to date. The United States also provides direct logistical support in terms of strategic airlift, equipment and communications. Algeria has pledged to provide strategic airlift.

VI. Implementation of the mandate of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

25. Since its deployment, MISCA has carried out a number of activities in pursuance of its mandate, as determined by the United Nations Security Council. The implementation of the strategic concept of operations of MISCA, developed jointly with ECCAS and with the active support of the United Nations, the European Union and bilateral partners, including the United States and France, provided for a three-phase operation: first, ensuring security in Bangui and the corridor connecting the Central African Republic to the Cameroon border; then, strengthening the Mission's presence in the west; and, finally, deploying the Mission to the east. Considering the context in which MISCA took over from MICOPAX, the schedule of operations had to be adjusted to enable the concurrent implementation of the different phases, while maintaining a strong presence in Bangui. The activities contributing to the attainment of the Mission's end state, as articulated in its strategic concept of operations, are as follows:

(a) Protection of civilians and restoration of security and public order

26. In order to ensure adequate protection of civilians, MISCA established a specific arrangement for Bangui, based on the division of the city into sectors. The contingents and formed police units that are deployed in the city conduct regular patrols, both motorized and on foot. These patrols are carried out day and night. In so doing, the objective is to ensure an effective presence not only on the main roads, but also within the different areas. The Central African Republic police and gendarmerie will join the patrols as soon as the current restructuring of these forces has been completed.

27. Furthermore, following consultations with Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, then Mayor of Bangui, and subsequent discussions with the district mayors, measures were taken to facilitate interaction with the civilian population, as part of the efforts to ensure improved security in the city. Thus, MISCA established static positions in each of the districts of Bangui. Similarly, the cell phone numbers of these different posts were provided to the local population via radio and other means, to enable them to alert MISCA as necessary, so that it could intervene in a timely fashion. This system has proved effective, particularly in the 5th district, where there is a high concentration of Muslims, including those who fled from other districts of Bangui. It should be noted that the 5th district is the economic heart of the capital. During the period under consideration, MISCA received thousands of calls from Bangui residents, and the Mission was able to intervene on many occasions.

28. The purpose of this arrangement is to deter and prevent attacks against civilians, looting and other crimes. It has also made it possible to intervene, if necessary by force, to put an end to activities that disrupt public order and endanger civilians. MISCA has saved many lives, stopped many looters and prevented the destruction of homes, public and religious buildings, and property. This occurred particularly with regard to the protection of the homes of government officials and mosques, especially in the 3rd district.

29. The deployment of MISCA elsewhere in the country has also contributed to the protection of the civilian population and the restoration of security and public order. The actions taken in this context include regular patrols, the arrest of armed individuals or those committing crimes and the protection of civilian property. Among other examples, in Bossangoa, in response to threats that anti-balaka elements posed to the Muslim population, from 23 January 2014, MISCA deployed elements of the Chadian contingent to ensure the safety of the civilians concerned. On 16 February 2014, MISCA, at the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Population Fund, protected a convoy of 28 women and 119 children who were going from Féré to Sibut. In general, MISCA protects the various camps of internally displaced persons in the country.

30. The efforts to protect the civilian population are extended to foreigners whose Governments decided to evacuate in light of the deteriorating security situation following the incidents in early December 2013. Thus, MISCA has escorted nationals of Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal who wanted to return their respective countries. Sometimes this support was provided on request and at other times, MISCA itself took the initiative to protect civilian foreigners in danger. Within the framework of the regular convoy escorts along the corridor that connects Bangui with the Cameroon border, MISCA units have, on several occasions, ensured the protection of foreigners attempting to leave the Central African Republic.

(b) Stabilization of the country and restoration of State authority

31. The action of MISCA with regard to this aspect of its mandate includes several aspects. First, MISCA provides security to the leaders of the transition, including the Head of State, the Prime Minister and other members of the Government, the President of the National Transitional Council and, at her request, Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, at the time when she was the mayor of Bangui. This protection is

necessary for the performance of their duties by officials of the transition and the speedy reactivation of the State apparatus.

32. Second, MISCA protects many public buildings and other sensitive strategic points. The hotspots in the capital (the presidential palace, ministry buildings, radio and national television, banks, telecommunications companies, hotels and restaurants, shops, etc.) are fully under the protection of the Mission. MISCA has also protected the Bangui prison since its reopening on 14 February 2014. In this regard, and thanks to the vigilance of the Rwandan contingent of MISCA, on 23 February 2014, the Mission foiled an escape attempt by anti-balaka leaders who were arrested by MISCA during an operation carried out on 15 February 2014 in the district of Boye-Rabe in Bangui. In total, about 700 soldiers and police officers are assigned to these tasks of static protection. This arrangement, which has the disadvantage of tying down a significant number of troops, nonetheless is essential in the current phase, given the limited capacity of the Central African Republic security forces. The gradual stabilization of the situation will enable MISCA to reduce the need for static protection and ensure a more dynamic presence in neighbourhoods of and outside Bangui.

33. MISCA also provides security for specific events. From 19 to 23 January 2014, MISCA ensured the security for the inauguration of the Head of State of the Transition. MISCA also took precautionary measures to prevent possible negative reactions, which could disturb public order, to decisions taken at the N'Djamena summit held on 9 and 10 January 2014.

34. Third, MISCA helps protect the administrative authorities outside Bangui, as part of the extension of State authority. In this context, and following the appointment of the sub-prefects and their assumption of office, MISCA made the necessary arrangements for their transportation to their duty stations and their security once there, as in the case for the prefect of Bossangoa, Ouham. The extension of State authority also involves the recovery of areas previously occupied by armed groups. The operation in Sibut at the end of January 2014 is emblematic in this regard. It should be recalled that the city of Sibut was attacked on 28 and 29 January 2014, with the influx of ex-Séléka elements from surrounding areas. The latter broke into the city and demanded the departure of the reduced company of the Gabonese contingent of MISCA, calling for secession. The MISCA force was reconstituted from Bangui and retook Sibut 48 hours later, thanks to an operation involving three companies of Burundian, Gabonese and Rwandan troops, supported by a Rwandan rapid reaction force and by Sangaris. MISCA has since established a permanent and strengthened presence in the area.

35. Fourth, the stabilization of the country also requires the physical disarmament of armed groups to allow for a gradual return to normalcy. In furtherance of this aspect of its mandate, between 11 and 16 January 2014, MISCA conducted an accelerated disarmament operation of ex-Séléka elements in charge of guarding the presidential palace or Palace of the Renaissance, as well as of those at the national broadcasting and television offices. These elements, initially grouped at the Roux camp, where the former Head of State of the Transition lived, were subsequently transferred to the camp of the regiment for the operational defence of the territory, after a systematic search in application of the confidence-building measures signed on 5 December 2013 by MICOPAX and Sangaris. On 8 February 2014, the ex-Séléka elements at the Kassai camp, also in Bangui, were disarmed. MISCA

collected all heavy weapons that were in the possession of these elements before cantoning them, under the protection of the Mission, at the camp of the regiment for the operational defence of the territory in Bangui. Initially, and thanks to the assistance provided by ECCAS, MISCA was able to bear the expenses for food and other related needs of these elements. Since then, other partners have taken over the support for those elements, who live in difficult conditions and have expressed a willingness to participate in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. It is important that the international community give the necessary attention to this issue.

36. Given that some ex-Séléka elements have escaped the disarmament operations, in some cases moving to the north-east with weapons and ammunition, MISCA took specific measures to deal with this situation. Several disarmament operations, including by force when necessary, were carried out inside the country. This was the case in Sibut, Kaga-Bandoro, Bozoum, Bouar, Paoua and Mbaiki. Other ex-Séléka elements, who are in the northern and north-western provinces, are awaiting their cantonment by MISCA, before being eligible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations.

37. These disarmament operations also involve the anti-balaka and other armed elements. In Bangui, these operations are carried out regularly. It is in this context that a major operation was conducted by MISCA, in cooperation with Sangaris, in the district of Boye-Rabe, on 15 February 2014, resulting in the seizure of several weapons and large quantities of ammunition and other military equipment. Along the corridor that connects Bangui with the Cameroon border, several disarmament operations have also been conducted, especially during escort and protection of trucks and other vehicles using this corridor. In Bossangoa, MISCA also carried out the disarmament of anti-balaka elements terrorizing the local Muslim population.

38. Finally, support for the restoration of State authority also includes the control by the transitional Government of its sources of income. In this respect, the actions of MISCA have focused on the removal, if necessary by force, of illegal roadblocks placed by gunmen along the corridor connecting Bangui with the Cameroon border, and securing this vital corridor for the economy of the Central African Republic. Indeed, the insecurity that prevailed along this route and the illegal exactions operated by armed gangs had the effect of significantly reducing the traffic along the corridor, depriving the Government of customs and other taxes that would have been levied on goods and other consignments entering the Central African Republic. Since 18 January 2014, MISCA has set up an escort arrangement for trucks travelling along the corridor. It operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from the Cameroon border towards Bangui, and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from Bangui to the Cameroon border. To date, more than 1,000 trucks have been escorted, in both directions, including for United Nations agencies, NGOs, Sangaris, traders and other actors.

39. At the same time, MISCA has encouraged the Central African Republic Government to establish a system for collection of customs and other duties, through a single centre in Douala, Cameroon. Such a system would also ensure transparency in the management of financial resources and increase the revenue the Government desperately needs to carry out its basic functions. Similarly, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission has recommended to the Prime Minister to initiate discussions with the Cameroonian authorities to agree on

modalities for the speedy clearance, at the Douala port, of consignments bound for the Central African Republic via the corridor secured by MISCA.

(c) Creation of conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need

40. By restoring security across the Central African Republic territory, with the support of Operation Sangaris, MISCA has created conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. More specifically, and as part of the efforts to ensure security along the corridor that connects Bangui to the Cameroonian border, MISCA has escorted dozens of trucks belonging to the World Food Programme (WFP) and dozens of others belonging to NGOs carrying humanitarian assistance to crisis-affected populations in the Central African Republic. It should be noted here that, on 27 January 2014, the WFP Deputy Emergency Coordinator in the Central African Republic sent a letter to the MISCA Force Commander expressing gratitude for the rapid intervention of MISCA and the protection given to WFP convoys. In this regard, and after MISCA learned, through the press, that WFP had resorted to costly air operations to deliver humanitarian assistance in the Central African Republic, on the ground that the route was very unreliable, the Mission reaffirmed that the corridor had been completely secured, that it undertook to protect all humanitarian convoys to the Central African Republic and that the limited resources available should rather be used to help the affected Central African Republic populations.

41. Moreover, the facilitation of humanitarian assistance entails the protection of displaced person sites and other places of refuge where vulnerable populations come to spend the night. A shelter called "Sanctuary of Hope" was launched on 12 February 2014 in the 5th district of Bangui to provide night-time accommodation to all those who feel threatened. The security of the site is also ensured by MISCA.

42. Finally, MISCA facilitates the movement of humanitarian aid agencies throughout the country. During the period under consideration, MISCA provided protection to many humanitarian workers, as well as visiting dignitaries.

(d) Support for national and international efforts for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement, and reform and/or restructuring of the defence and security sectors

43. In accordance with its mandate, MISCA supports the two national initiatives on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, coordinated by BINUCA. To this end, two national coordination frameworks, in the form of "committees", were established to better channel and harmonize efforts in these areas at both the strategic and technical levels. These coordination frameworks, which had been suspended as a result of the deteriorating security situation, were reactivated upon the establishment of MISCA.

44. In addition, one month prior to the formal establishment of MISCA, the Technical Committee for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration had validated an overall strategy developed with assistance from the African Union. This strategy lays the foundation for the overall framework of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and takes into account all armed groups, including self-defence groups, in a process geared towards community reintegration and repatriation of foreign combatants. This strategy is being revised to adapt it to

the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 2134 (2014), in particular to take into account the new dynamics and the emergence and/or strengthening of certain armed groups which had not been adequately addressed before.

45. Meanwhile, the confidence-building measures agreed to on 5 December 2013 by MICOPAX and Operation Sangaris have had an impact on the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, in that they have contributed to: (a) the reversal of the military balance of power, which is becoming increasingly conducive to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; (b) the gradual neutralization of armed groups, whose activities are expected to be increasingly limited; and (c) the gradual stabilization of the security situation, which could make it possible to conduct activities in the field. Although non-binding, these confidence-building measures have had a positive impact on the security situation in major cities, and have made it possible to canton 7,140 ex-Séléka elements in 14 sites around Bangui, which were to be reduced to three or four sites. Although, at this stage of the cantonment, the ex-Séléka elements have retained their small arms and ammunition for their own safety, a second phase, subject to funding, should allow for a more organized cantonment, which would facilitate the identification, census and profiling of these elements, their total disarmament and the provision of temporary care until appropriate programmes are launched. To this end, MISCA has contributed to the development of a pilot cantonment project.

46. Simultaneously, efforts by MISCA have also been aimed at promoting national consensus on issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform. This work culminated, on 6 January 2014, in the signing, by the Prime Minister and the Head of State of the Transition, of general guidelines No. 001. The guidelines constitute a great opportunity, as they articulate a common and consensual vision, supported by the national authorities, concerning disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform during the transition period.

47. Similarly, in order to initiate discussions on the format of forces and their restructuring, an appeal for a census of the Central African Republic armed forces, the gendarmerie and the national police was made between 23 and 31 December 2013. According to the national authorities, this made it possible to identify 3,538 out of 8,434 members of the armed forces; 1,085 out of 2,226 gendarmes; and 900 out of 1,500 police officers. The next steps should lead to a more effective control of the census through the establishment of a computerized, single, centralized system that will make it possible to create a usable database. In this regard, MISCA has requested support from UNDP in transferring the necessary skills in order to equip the Mission to support the registration of the elements of the defence and security forces.

48. In the light of the evolution of the situation, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes should be conducted concurrently. Indeed, the interim security sector reform, which is that of the transition period, will have to focus on the gradual and selective integration of the ex-Séléka elements into the defence and security forces. Following this selection phase, on the basis of criteria and a background check to be agreed upon consensually, the demobilization and reintegration into civilian life of those former Séléka elements who have not been selected will take place. In parallel, a dialogue process will be initiated with self-defence and militia groups, including anti-balaka,

who should neither be grouped nor cantoned, but rather dismantled and reintegrated into society. In addition, during the transition period, the armed forces should be maintained in their barracks, while resources provided to the police and the gendarmerie should be increased substantially to ensure security and public order in support of MISCA. The judicial system should also be strengthened to enable the effective functioning of the criminal justice system. The support of international partners is critical to ensure the success of this process.

VII. Evolution of the security situation

49. The deployment of MISCA took place in a deteriorating security environment, marked by the consequences of the attack by the anti-balaka group at the beginning of December 2013. The period was characterized by clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka elements, and sometimes between individuals and families, on communal and religious grounds. Many crimes have been committed. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes and sought refuge in other areas of the city of Bangui considered safer, especially around the airport. This resurgence of communal violence and insecurity kept the capital city and the MISCA troops on high alert until the end of December 2013. The first half of January 2014 was relatively calm, before the situation worsened, particularly in Bangui, in the second half of the month. Since the beginning of February 2014, the situation has improved significantly, in Bangui and in the interior of the country.

50. While insecurity affected the whole of the capital, Bangui, particular neighbourhoods were especially affected. Such was the case in the neighbourhoods of Gobongo and Combattants, in the 8th district, Boy Rabe and Miskine, in the 6th district, and Boeing and Castor, in the 3rd and 2nd districts, respectively. During the last week of January 2014, more than 30 cases of abuse were reported in these areas. The corridor from PK12 (in the northern part of the city) to PK9 (south-west) was the area most affected by armed clashes between ex-Séléka and anti-balaka elements. About 20 cases were reported in this area during the same period.

51. The situation in the countryside was mixed: calm in the centre and north-east, and more tense in the west and north-west, particularly in Beloko, Bouar, Bozoum and Bossangoa, where antagonism between anti-balaka and ex-Séléka, in the second half of December 2013, resulted in forced displacement. Several incidents have subsequently been noted in different places. On 17 January 2014, the Muslim community of the city of Boali suffered an attack that resulted in up to ten deaths and several injuries, primarily from rudimentary weapons. Acts of massive looting also occurred. On 28 and 29 January 2014, the city of Sibut was attacked, with the massive influx of ex-Séléka elements from the surrounding areas. As indicated above, these elements entered the city and expressed their determination to secede, demanding the departure of a small company of the Gabonese contingent of MISCA. These elements committed many abuses, particularly killings of people considered to be close to the anti-balaka group, as well as the destruction and looting of property. Several other areas suffered similar abuses. On 5 February 2014, in the town of Amou, located in the prefecture of Kemo, abuses, killings, looting and theft were committed by the ex-Séléka against the population. On the same day, in N'Zakoundou, located about 10 km from Bank in the Ouham Pende region, an attack by ex-Séléka elements kilied 22 people, including 16 women and 6 men. Several houses were burned. Another attack by ex-Séléka elements in the locality of

Dakol, also in Ouham Pende on 5 February 2014, resulted in the deaths of three people, including a school principal and two students.

52. On the main corridor linking Bangui to the border with Cameroon, the situation was initially characterized by the persistence of illegal checkpoints (approximately 22). The most belligerent elements were stationed in the localities of Yaloké, Baoro and Bossembélé, controlled by ex-Séléka, who illegally collected taxes and carried out exactions from people and road users under the threat of armed violence. This impeded the delivery of humanitarian aid and supplies to Bangui and other parts of the country, while at the same time depriving the Government of the resources needed to restart the administrative and State machinery.

53. This situation stemmed from several factors. To start with, it was difficult to clearly define the opposition forces, even though the last N'Djamena summit shed more light on the identification of the leaders of some anti-balaka groups, thus facilitating efforts to hold them accountable. Most armed or self-defence groups do not appear to have any identifiable command and control. In the wake of the election of the new Head of State of the Transition, ex-Séléka elements were confined, and some were disarmed by MISCA. During the second half of January 2014, with the reversal of the balance of power, violence resumed, characterized by numerous attacks against Muslim communities.

54. Another factor relates to the situation of ex-armed forces members who vanished, taking with them their arms and ammunition. Some of these elements have joined the anti-balaka. Of course, since then, efforts have been made to regroup the Central African Republic armed forces, but the issue of discipline and professionalism remains of concern. Following a ceremony organized by the Head of State of the Transition to celebrate the rebirth of the national army, on 5 February 2014, at the National School of Administration and Magistracy in Bangui, a soldier, suspected by his comrades to have worked with Séléka soldiers, was lynched. This incident, which took place after the international forces had left the scene, slowed the process of the return to the army of elements who had left the ranks. It should be noted here that MISCA had to intervene to protect General Abdel Kader, Deputy Chief of Staff, whose safety was threatened.

55. A final factor which contributed to the deterioration of the security situation relates to the difficulties that the previous transitional Government had experienced in the implementation of the security aspects of the transition road map. In its first phase, the road map provided for a rapid restructuring of the Central African Republic security forces, so as to enable them to contribute towards ensuring security in Bangui and policing, through joint patrols with MISCA elements.

56. As mentioned above, since the beginning of February 2014, the situation has gradually and significantly improved. These gains stem from several factors: the sectorization of Bangui and the provinces, the strengthening of MISCA, and coordination with Sangaris.

57. In Bangui, there are clear signs of a gradual return to normal life. The number of security incidents has dropped dramatically. The curfew, which was in effect from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., was shortened to 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. Schools have begun to reopen and the University of Bangui resumed operations on 24 February 2014, with the administration having returned to its premises since 8 January 2014. Economic activity is also gradually picking up, even though it has been seriously affected by

the exodus of Muslim traders. Incidents do continue to occur, as evidenced by the killing of three Muslims in Bangui on 22 February 2014 in the Combattants area, as well as many other incidents. Most of the current difficulties faced in the security situation relate to criminal acts rather than clashes between opposing political and military groups.

58. While serious cases of violence continue to be recorded, the situation is also improving in the provinces, thanks to the enhanced presence of MISCA and the operations it is carrying out in cooperation with Operation Sangaris. The number of killings, cases of intimidation and other abuses, as well as requests to relocate to other places, have decreased. Nothing illustrates this development better than the security provided by MISCA along the corridor that connects Bangui to the Cameroon border. This enables humanitarian, trade and other convoys to use this route.

VIII. Humanitarian situation

59. The already difficult humanitarian situation deteriorated further following the violent clashes of 5 December 2013. As of 18 February 2014, there were an estimated 698,500 internally displaced persons across the Central African Republic territory. In Bangui, there are 273,500 such persons, spread over 66 sites and in hosting communities, 60 per cent of whom are children. A total of 65,119 foreign nationals have left for their countries of origin, while 250,230 Central African Republic nationals have sought refuge in the countries of the subregion. Nearly 2 million Central African Republic nationals live in a state of vulnerability and are in need of emergency food aid. Living conditions and hygiene in the internally displaced person camps are deplorable. This situation of extreme vulnerability has led to an increase in the number of children suffering from severe malnutrition, from 1,000 to 28,000. Other diseases such as malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhoea are also found in the sites. Only 56 per cent of sites are covered by health services.

60. The improvement of the security situation in Bangui since the beginning of February 2014 has created favourable conditions for the voluntary return of internally displaced persons to their homes. The site at the Bangui International Airport now has 70,000 internally displaced persons at night, down from 100,000 a few weeks ago. More than 80 per cent of the people hosted at this site intend to return home. The tendency to return home is observed in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th districts and in Bimbo, in greater Bangui. Four sites in Bangui, namely Saint Paul-Communauté des Soeurs, Saint Paul-Séminaire, Saint Paul-Lycée Pi XII and Camp FOMAC/Saint Paul, are no longer hosting displaced persons.

61. The needs of displaced persons and vulnerable groups are considerable. A donor conference for the Central African Republic, held in Brussels on 20 January 2014, promised to mobilize $500 million for humanitarian assistance. To date, only 14 per cent of that amount has been mobilized.

62. Since taking office, the African Union Special Representative has undertaken consultations with the municipal authorities of the city of Bangui, as well as with humanitarian actors, to assess the humanitarian situation in the city and facilitate a concerted, coordinated and sustainable solution to the problem of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced person sites, particularly at the airport. MISCA teams are regularly deployed at the sites in Bangui and elsewhere in

the country, to meet displaced persons and local communities in order to better assess needs and enhance the advocacy role of the Mission. On the occasion of a visit to the Central African Republic, from 17 to 21 February 2014, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Ms. Aisha L. Abdullah, and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, travelled to Bossangoa, where they visited displaced person sites.

IX. Human rights situation

63. Since 4 January 2014, the African Union Commission has deployed an initial team of five human rights observers, within the civilian component of MISCA, to enable the Mission to investigate and better document violations of human rights, within the framework of overall efforts to fight impunity. A further five observers are expected to be deployed soon. In implementation of their mandates, these observers have had regular meetings with the Central African Republic authorities, civil society organizations, international organizations and other stakeholders. They have also undertaken field visits in different parts of the Central African Republic territory.

64. It has emerged from these meetings and field visits that serious violations of human rights have been committed with impunity. Many cases of rape, particularly gang rape, forced marriages, sexual slavery, and physical abuse of women and girls have been committed. The victims have identified their tormentors as both ex-Séléka and anti-balaka elements. In Bangui, for example, in January 2014, MISCA documented 251 cases of rape, affecting 224 adult females, one adult male and 26 other persons under the age of 18. In the localities of Batangafo (sub-prefecture of Ouham), Borno (a town 4 km from Bossangoa in the north-western part of the country), Dangbatro (a village located 7 km from the town of Bria, capital of the prefecture of Haute-Kotto, in the centre-east) and Kabo (one of the five sub-prefectures of Ouham in the north-west), several cases of rape were also recorded. There have been consistent reports of recruitment and use of children by various armed groups, including ex-Séléka and anti-balaka, in violation of relevant international legal instruments.

65. Various violations by both anti-balaka and ex-Séléka have been reported, involving summary executions, killings, lynching, persecution and abductions. Thus, in Bangui, on 25 December 2013, a mass grave of 30 bodies was identified at the place called the "Panthers' Hill" (located at about 300 metres from the Roux camp). A second mass grave of 13 bodies was also found by MISCA forces on 9 February 2014 at the support and service battalion, previously occupied by the ex-Séléka and currently the site of their cantonment.

66. Numerous violations of human rights have also been committed throughout the country. In the city of Boali, in the prefecture of Ombella M'poko, between 1 and 2 December 2013, a camp populated mainly by Muslim Fulanis was the subject of an attack by unidentified armed elements. The attack resulted in 13 deaths, as well as the destruction of property (houses and cattle). In retaliation, many people of Christian denomination were killed by Muslim armed elements. Thus, on 4 December 2013, a Boali traditional chief named Zangato was killed in his field, along with his three sons, by people who were, according to testimonies, associated

with ex-Séléka and other Muslim individuals. On the same day, a certain Mr. Simon Anzibe, commonly known as "Z", was killed by a group of people armed with arrows, guns and daggers, on the pretext that he belonged to the anti-balaka. On 17 January 2014, following the dismantling of the armed group along the Bangui-Garoua-Boulaye corridor and the departure of former Séléka groups, the anti-balaka led an attack against the Muslim community in Boali. This attack resulted in the killing of six people. Following this attack, the human rights component of MISCA visited Boali on 24 January 2014. It was able to see two mass graves, containing a total of 35 bodies, and three individual graves. These two pits and two of the graves are located near a checkpoint that was held by the former Séléka, at the northern end of the town of Boali, while the other grave is located in the adjoining forest dam of Boali. Various accounts attribute the killings to the ex-Séléka and the anti-balaka.

67. In the towns of Berberati (in the west, in the prefecture of Mambéré-Kadeï), Bouar (in the west, in the prefecture of Nana-Mambéré), Bozoum (in the north-west, in the prefecture of Ouham-Pendé), Bossangoa (in the north-west, in the prefecture of Ouham) and Sibut (in the centre, in the prefecture of Kemo-Gribingui), information gathered indicates the occurrence of several murders, summary executions and acts of torture affecting both the Christian and Muslim populations.

68. Numerous acts of looting and destruction of property were also noted. This is the case in Bangui, particularly in the neighbourhoods of PK12, Km 5 and Miskine, from which the Muslim population has fled, leaving behind all their belongings. Many cases of looting and destruction of public property have also been noted. One of the serious consequences of the crisis is that justice is almost inaccessible. The lack of police, justice and prison administrations helps to accentuate impunity.

69. Although the human rights situation remains particularly worrying, some improvement has nonetheless been evident. This improvement is due to the efforts by MISCA forces, supported by Sangaris, to provide security. The reopening of the main Ngaragba prison is also a positive development.

70. At its meeting of 29 January 2014, the Peace and Security Council welcomed the establishment, on 22 January 2014, of an international commission of inquiry to shed light on the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Central African Republic since 1 January 2013, and requested MISCA to provide the necessary support to that Commission. The Peace and Security Council also welcomed the deployment, by the Commission, of an initial group of human rights observers within MISCA and requested the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to take all necessary measures to contribute to the promotion of human rights in the Central African Republic and to submit to it a specific report.

X. Observations

71. In recent months, the Central African Republic has experienced extreme violence, which has seriously affected its social fabric, resulted in severe polarization and led to the collapse of the national economy and of the remnants of the State structures. The humanitarian situation is particularly alarming, as it is marked by massive displacement of persons, both Central African Republic nationals and foreigners, and large-scale violations of human rights have taken place. The situation poses a serious threat not only to the future of the Central African Republic, but also to regional security and stability. Even though the acts of

violence that occurred in the Central African Republic targeted specific communities, the conflict cannot be reduced to a religious war. Rather, it is the result of a combination of specific political and social factors related to the history of the Central African Republic, as well as to the violent episodes in recent months and their political exploitation by certain actors.

72. In view of the marked deterioration of the situation that occurred in the month of December 2013, the African Union and ECCAS, with the support of the rest of the international community, have stepped up their efforts to address the situation. The resolve and determination of the ECCAS leaders, particularly the current Chairman of this organization and the Chairman of the Follow-up Committee on the Central African Republic, Presidents Idriss Déby Itno of Chad and Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Congo, are to be commended. The support of ECCAS has been multifaceted. It includes both political and financial support, with the latter through the payment of salaries to the Central African Republic civil servants. In particular, the decisions of the ECCAS extraordinary summit of January 2014 helped boost the transition and opened new prospects for the country. The political role of the region is more crucial than ever before to ensure the success of the efforts to stabilize the situation in the Central African Republic. Therefore, it is important that the international community, particularly the United Nations, continue to support the efforts of the region.

73. Although the security situation is still volatile and alarming, it has undoubtedly begun to evolve in a positive direction. The number of incidents has decreased significantly, both in Bangui and in the rest of the country, and life gradually has begun to return to normal. The international community, including the United Nations, should take note of these developments and welcome them. Obviously, more still needs to be done because the challenges that lie ahead are many and daunting, as illustrated by the attacks against civilians and other crimes that continue to be committed in the Central African Republic territory. No effort should be spared in this regard.

74. This positive development is the result of the re-launching of the transition following the N'Djamena extraordinary summit and the action taken on the ground by MISCA and Operation Sangaris. Building on the work of MICOPAX, MISCA has made efforts to effectively implement its mandate. The results obtained in a very short period of time have been achieved at great cost. Nearly 20 members of MISCA have lost their lives in the performance of their duties. Over one hundred others have been wounded. It is only fitting to pay tribute to them and their countries for the sacrifices made in the service of peace, security and stability in the Central African Republic.

75. The successes of MISCA were made possible by the support of international bilateral and multilateral partners. The African Union thanks all the partners that have provided support to MISCA, in particular the European Union, France and the United States, including financial, logistical and technical support, which was crucial for the deployment of MISCA and the conduct of its operations. The gratitude of the African Union also goes to the other international partners and the African Union member States which have provided support or pledged to support MISCA. The African Union is also grateful to the United Nations for its technical support.

76. The results obtained are particularly significant as they were achieved in particularly difficult circumstances and with limited resources. Despite the support of several international partners, the Mission still lacks adequate communication and mobility, and its funding is also insufficient. There is therefore an urgent need for the international community to mobilize itself further to support MISCA, through the provision of additional financial and logistical resources and, as required, technical expertise, as well as through the provision of support in other specific areas. Such support will enable the Mission to carry out its mandate successfully, including, as necessary, the increase of its strength, in order to create conditions conducive to the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. It is clear that the success of such an operation will depend largely on the success of the action of MISCA and Operation Sangaris.

77. By deploying MISCA, the African Union has, from the outset, envisaged the transformation, at the appropriate time, of this Mission into a United Nations peacekeeping operation, building on the lessons of past experiences. Indeed, after the initial stabilization phase, in which MISCA and Operation Sangaris are currently engaged, it is necessary to enhance the involvement of the international community in favour of the Central African Republic, including through a United Nations peacekeeping operation, to help in the organization of the elections and to carry out other crucial tasks for the long-term stabilization of the country. As stated in the letter from the Chairperson of the Commission to the United Nations Secretary-General, dated 17 February 2014 (S/2014/117), MISCA, with the support of Operation Sangaris, expects to complete the initial stabilization phase of the situation within six to nine months. In this context, the African Union calls for the establishment of a logistical support package, financed by the contributions of the Members of the United Nations. By enhancing the predictability of the support provided to MISCA, the United Nations will enable the African Union to leave it with a strong and responsive mission, thereby allowing the United Nations to focus on the actions necessary for the long-term stabilization of the Central African Republic.

78. As indicated above, the deployment of a United Nations operation to take over from the African Union should be seen as part of an overall and greater international engagement. This engagement must be based on a judicious division of labour among all the international actors concerned: ECCAS, the African Union, the United Nations and other key actors, including bilateral partners and international financial institutions. A lasting solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic requires the contribution of all, based on the comparative advantages of the various actors. Such an approach is all the more necessary as the challenges facing the Central African Republic extend beyond security: they also have dimensions related to political and socioeconomic aspects, reconstruction of the State and promotion of reconciliation in a context where the social fabric has been severely undermined by the violence that has rocked the country.

79. Indeed, beyond the security dimension, the international community should focus on addressing the most urgent socioeconomic problems, including the payment of salaries, the restoration of basic services and support for the reconstruction of the State. This action should also aim at combating impunity and promoting reconciliation. From this viewpoint, the speedy designation of individuals and entities undermining the peace efforts in the Central African Republic, in order to put in place the sanctions provided for in United Nations

Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), is very important. Equally important is the work expected from the international commission of inquiry established on 22 January 2014 to investigate violations of human rights and international humanitarian law since 1 January 2013. In conformity with the communiqué adopted at the Peace and Security Council meeting of 22 January 2014, MISCA is ready to give all the necessary support to the work of the bodies in charge of these two issues. The African Union is convinced that speedy action in these two fields will send a clear message to spoilers and to the Central African Republic political actors involved in inciting violence and hatred. At the same time, the African Union and ECCAS, in consultation with the Central African Republic authorities, should speed up the preparations for the convening of the reconciliation conference mandated by the extraordinary summit of ECCAS held in N'Djamena on 9 and 10 January 2014.

80. Following the transfer of authority to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the African Union and ECCAS must continue to play a crucial role in the political and other fields alongside the United Nations and other international partners. This includes political support for the transition and coordination of international efforts through the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, co-chaired by the African Union Commission and the Congo, in its capacity as the country chairing the ECCAS Follow-up Committee on the Central African Republic. It is essential that this role be highlighted in any resolution authorizing the transformation of MISCA into a United Nations operation and be strongly supported by the United Nations Security Council. From this point of view, it is important that the draft resolution to be prepared for this purpose be the subject of close consultations between the African Union and the United Nations.

81. Important as it is, international solidarity alone will not be able to overcome the serious difficulties faced by the Central African Republic. The Central African Republic political and other stakeholders have a crucial role to play. There can be no lasting solution without national ownership and leadership. The proposed United Nations operation must be designed and conducted on the basis of this principle. The international community cannot replace the Central African Republic actors. Its role is to accompany and support them.

82. Consequently, it is crucial that the Central African Republic actors place the supreme interests of their country above partisan and other considerations. They must seize the unique opportunity offered by the ECCAS summit of 9 and 10 January 2013 to carry out the transition successfully and end the terrible suffering endured by their people. In this respect, the election of Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza as Head of State of the Transition, the appointment of a new Prime Minister and the subsequent formation of a new Government are encouraging signs. But more is still required from them. They should learn from the trajectory of their country since independence and the cycle of instability which has deprived their people of the benefits of development and democracy. They should work to heal the numerous wounds caused by the violence over the past months and promote sincere reconciliation among all the components of society. They should understand that the solution to the problems faced by their country is in their hands and that no external entity can replace them.